

Historic, archived document

Do not assume content reflects current scientific knowledge, policies, or practices.

STATISTICAL SUMMARY

BUREAU OF AGRICULTURAL ECONOMICS, U. S. D. A.

SS - 26

JANUARY 10, 1945

FULL BARNs AND GRANARIES

Final crop estimates—farmers turned out total crops last year 24 percent above the ten year 1923-32 or pre-drought average, 6 percent larger than 1943 and 11 percent more than in any other year save that peak 1942. They did this with a lack of skilled help and in spite of a bad planting season, drought in the East, and other handicaps. These bumper crops were the fruit of good farming plus weather that saved several crops in the nick of time. The good farming showed especially in expert use of labor, shifts to dependable crops, heavy use of fertilizer where it would do the most good, ditto lime, maximum use of machinery, hybrid corn, high yielding wheat, low-growing sorghums (for combine), skilful adjustment to bad weather and other conditions—and hard work. The finally good growing weather showed up in average crop yields 7 percent above 1943 and only between 2 and 3 percent below that all-time record yield of 1942.

AN ALL-TIME WHEAT RECORD

Total wheat crop 1,079 million bushels, largest ever grown—70 million larger than previous record crop of 1915. *Winter wheat*, which got a bad start, turned out 764 million bushels, a near record. *Spring wheat* crop 315 million bushels, a little above 1943 and 66 percent above the 10-year average. Acreage of spring wheat (18.6 million acres) was the largest since 1938, but yield of 16.9 bushels per acre was lower than previous year, or 1942. The spring wheat crop included 32 million bushels of *durum*, considerably under large durum crops of two preceding years.

HYBRIDS SWELL THE CORN CROP

1944 corn crop largest ever grown, 3,228 million bushels, 6 percent above previous year and even 3 percent above that famous 1942 crop. As usual, about 10 percent of corn crop will go for silage, forage, etc. Nevertheless, corn harvested for grain is a record, 2,910 million bushels, compared with 2,725 million in 1943 and 2,849 million in 1942, the previous record.

Few people realize how important hybrid corn has become. It was a very large factor in the nation-wide average yield of 33.2 bushels per acre for all corn last year. Most of the Corn Belt States now plant 85 to 99 percent of their acreage to hybrids; of total corn acreage in the country 57

percent is now planted to hybrids.

BUMPER CROP OF CIGARETTE TOBACCO

Three types of tobacco are normally used in production of cigarettes: flue-cured, Burley, and Southern Maryland. The total 1944 crop of those three types was 1,604 million pounds, 27 percent above 1943 crop and largest ever grown.

Market sales point to a *flue-cured* crop of 1,080 million pounds, 37 percent above 1943 and 38 percent above ten-year average (1933-42). This is second such crop to exceed a billion pounds, although it is around 8 percent below 1939 record.

Reports indicate record *Burley* crop, 492 million pounds, about 100 million pounds or 26 percent above 1943 and 165 million pounds or 51 percent above ten-year average. Acreage for this type expanded 21 percent last year—to an area of 472,700 acres.

Southern Maryland belt, like the other two cigarette types, showed sharp upturn last year, crop being estimated at 32 million pounds, compared with 21 million pounds in previous year.

29 PERCENT FEWER HOGS IN 1944

Hog production in 1944 dropped sharply from the all-time peak reached in 1943 and further decline is in prospect in 1945, though at a lessened rate. The *fall pig crop* of 1944 was 31.3 million head, down 34 percent from the fall of 1943. Last spring's crop amounted to 55.4 million, down 25 percent from previous spring. When the fall and spring crops are added together, the total 1944 pig crop was 86.7 million head, down 29 percent from previous year.

The number of sows farrowing in the fall of 1944 was 4.9 million, a 35 percent decrease from a year before.

Farmers' reports on breeding intentions for this coming spring pig crop indicate 8.5 million sows to farrow. This would be about 7 percent below the number farrowing last spring and 30 percent below the record number that farrowed in the spring of 1943. If breeding intentions are carried out and litters are about average, it would mean a 1945 spring pig crop of about 52 million head, which would be around 3½ million below the crop of last spring.

The December reports showed a much smaller number of hogs over 6 months old on farms than a year earlier. Fewer farmers are keeping sows—a fact bearing on the

PARITY PRICES FOR FARM PRODUCTS AND ACTUAL PRICES RECEIVED

COMMODITY AND UNIT	ACTUAL PRICE		PARITY PRICE
	NOV. 15 1944	DEC. 15 1944	
Wheat, bu. dol.	1.43	1.45	1.51
Corn, bu. dol.	1.06	1.06	1.10
Oats, bu. dol.	.66	.69	.682
Cotton, lb. ct.	20.78	20.85	21.20
Potatoes, bu. dol.	1.43	1.50	1.24
Hogs, 100 lb. dol.	13.50	13.40	12.40
Beef cattle, 100 lb. . . dol.	11.60	11.50	9.27
Veal calves, 100 lb. . . dol.	12.90	12.90	11.50
Lambs, 100 lb. dol.	12.20	12.40	10.10
Butterfat, lb. ct.	50.7	51.0	¹ 49.3
Milk, wholesale, 100 lb. . dol.	3.39	3.39	¹ 3.00
Chickens, live, lb. . . . ct.	24.0	24.1	19.5
Eggs, doz. ct.	43.4	44.5	¹ 44.2

¹Adjusted for seasonal variation.

general reduction.

FEWER PIGS IN '44 MEAN LESS PORK IN '45

Hog slaughter in 1945 may be about 20 to 25 percent smaller than last year, when the total slaughtered was apparently about 97 million head. Most of the reduction will occur during the first 9 months of this year. Pork supplies, however, may not be reduced as much this year as the cut in hog slaughter would indicate, since hogs may possibly be fed to somewhat heavier weights.

LESS FATS THIS YEAR

The current season's output of fats and oils is going to be less than was hoped for. Apparently the drop in hog production means around 1 billion pounds less fat from that source this year than last. That is the biggest cut. Output of domestic edible oils—cottonseed, soybean, corn, and peanut—is now placed at about 2.9 billion pounds, compared with 2.8 billion produced last season. With flaxseed crop only about half of record-breaking 1943 crop, linseed oil from domestic flaxseed will fall off. Now appears that total fats and oils from domestic materials in 1944-45 will be slightly under 10 billion pounds. This would compare with 11.2 billion produced in 1943-44. Imports expected to be about like or somewhat less than last season. Demand will continue heavy.

CATTLE NUMBERS HEADING DOWNWARD?

Cattle numbers tend to move in a cycle. Apparently the beginning of 1944 marked a peak; the number of all cattle on hand a year ago was 82 million head, largest ever, 8 million more than on hand at previous peak of the cycle on 1/1/1934. In view of the record number sent to slaughter last year, it would appear that cattle on hand have been reduced 1 to 2 million head during the year past, that the upward trend in numbers which began in 1938 has been reversed, and that we are now headed into the downward phase of the cycle. While this applies to beef cows and heifers and to all calves, it does not yet apply to milk cows and heifers, which were apparently still increasing in 1944. Number of milk cows and heifers on farms at beginning of 1944 was 33.8 million head; number of beef cows and heifers 18.5 million. The 1945 figures will be available soon.

LESS POULTRY

Poultry markets this winter are reflecting the 20 percent decrease in number of chickens raised last year. Army taking most that is available in main eastern producing areas. Average price received by farmers for chickens in mid-December

24 cents a pound. Wholesale prices at or near ceilings; demand strong. Total stocks of poultry in cold storage, December 1, were 270 million pounds, compared with 198 million year previous—Government holding 35 percent of current stock or 94 million pounds, much of it turkey. WFA support price to producers for eggs in 1945 announced minimum of 24 cents a dozen for straight-run eggs and 27 cents for candled eggs. During 1944 WFA bought roughly 5½ million cases of shell eggs for price support purposes.

Egg production January-November 1944, totaled 4,508 million dozen, almost equal to 1943 year total. Number of layers on farms last fall (November) 404 million birds, about like previous fall. But the number of potential layers—hens plus young pullets—on farms December 1 was down 8 percent from previous year, suggesting fewer eggs in months ahead.

HEAVY MILK OUTPUT - BUTTER SHORT

Number of milk cows on farms in 1945 appears likely to average around 1 to 1½ percent above 1944. With this basis and reasonably good prices and feed, might reach milk output of 120 billion pounds this year, the goal desired. Milk production in October was 9.1 billion pounds, 4 percent over year earlier and first month of record with over 9 billion output. High production was result of good prices, ample feed and pasture—and a lot of hard work. Production per cow averaged 12.51 pounds November 1, or .57 pound more than year previous. However, only 66 percent of cows were being milked, lowest for date since 1925; thought to be due mainly to price and help handicaps in butter areas.

Butter production for October estimated at 100 million pounds, a decline of 7 million pounds from previous October. According to weekly reports, creamery butter production in November was lagging about 10 percent behind November 1943. October output of creamery butter was lowest in 21 years.

FARM LABOR FORCE SHRINKING

Total number of farm workers December 1, was 9,337,000, about 2 percent fewer than a year earlier and smallest number on record, that date. The drop is entirely in hired workers; number of these on farms 2,048,000, last month, 9 percent below December 1943 and lowest in 10 years. Number of family workers 7,289,000, about the same as year ago.

For more detailed information, write the Division of Economic Information, Bureau of Agricultural Economics, U. S. Department of Agriculture, Washington 25, D. C., or telephone Republic 4142—Branch 4407.

CURRENT INDEXES FOR AGRICULTURE		
INDEX NUMBERS	BASE PERIOD	DECEMBER 1944
Prices received by farmers . .	1910-14 = 100	200
Prices paid by farmers, interest and taxes	1910-14 = 100	171
Parity ratio	1910-14 = 100	117
Wholesale prices of food . .	1910-14 = 100	164
Retail prices of food	1910-14 = 100	¹ 176
Farm wage rates	1910-14 = 100	¹ 325
Weekly factory earnings . . .	1910-14 = 100	² 433
RATIOS	LONG-TIME DEC. - AVERAGE	DECEMBER 1944
Hog-corn ratio, U. S.	11.9	12.6
Butterfat-feed ratio, U. S. . .	27.2	26.3
Milk-feed ratio, U. S.	1.37	1.54
Egg-feed ratio, U. S.	22.6	20.7
PRODUCTION COMPARISONS	JAN. - NOV. 1943	JAN. - NOV. 1944
Milk, (Bil. lb.)	109.9	110.5
Eggs, (Bil.)	50.9	54.1
Beef, (Dr. wt., mil. lb.) . . .	5,384	6,077
Lamb & Mutton (Dr. wt., mil. lb.)	864	806
Pork & Lard (Mil. lb.)	10,771	11,677
All meats (Dr. wt., mil. lb.)	17,556	19,405

¹November figure.

²Factory pay roll per employed worker adjusted for seasonal variation. October figure.